

*Biographical Notice, with Extracts from the Correspondence, of the late Mr. Motley, who was massacred at Kalangan, May 1st, 1859.*  
By HENRY DENNY, A.L.S. &c.

Mr. James Motley was born May 2nd, 1822, at Osmondthorp House, near Leeds, and inherited from his father, Thomas Motley, Esq., an ardent love for Natural History. A near relative, in a letter to me, says, "I was much with him in his early years. In our walks he could not pass a flower, or snail, or bee, that was new to him without stopping to examine it, and asking all about its habits. He knew the names of all the trees and plants at Osmondthorp before he could pronounce them; and his fondness for botany and geology increased with his riper years. He was educated at St. Peter's School, York, under the Rev. Mr. Creyke (now Archdeacon), and from thence entered St. John's College, Cambridge, to study for the Church; he eventually, however, chose Civil Engineering as a profession, to assist in some extensive mining operations which his father was connected with in Wales. These proving an unfortunate speculation in a pecuniary point of view\*, he obtained, at the recommendation of Sir H. de la Beche, an appointment in a similar capacity at Labuan, and proceeded thither in February 1848, where he remained five years, when, owing to some disagreement with the Company under whom he went out, he left Borneo and passed a year at Singapore, when he again returned to Borneo under an engagement with a Dutch Company, formed at Batavia for working coal-mines in the Netherland Indian possessions. This proved an undertaking of no small labour, as he had to commence operations by a trigonometrical survey of the country and fixing the limits of the Company's possessions, which were only vaguely expressed in the contract. The spot selected, after more than 100 borings, was at Kalangan in Banjarmassing, on the south coast of Borneo. This speculation promised to be a successful one, the coal being of excellent quality, the pit containing three seams of coal of four feet six inches, three feet, and two feet respectively. The transport, however, from the pit was difficult, on account of the small river which was capable of carrying coal-boats being lost in a dense forest. Mr. Motley overcame this obstacle by cutting an entirely new one, which proved an interesting geological operation, as throwing much light on the formation of the coal-measures of the island which he considered as undoubtedly late Tertiary. He says, "I have here a coal-field so plainly growing under my eyes, and containing just the same plants as I find fossil in the measures we are working, that probably no one was ever in so favourable a position for observing even very minute points of resemblance. I have, in fact, the same state of things which would exist in the fen-counties of England if they possessed a tropical climate, or if man had never been there with dykes, dams, canals, and cultivation. The phæ-

\* At this period he published a volume of poetry entitled 'Tales of the Cymri,' founded on the early traditions of Wales, which evinced considerable ability, both as a scholar and poet.

nomenon of social plants occupying the ground almost exclusively (a state of things which must have existed during the European coal æra to a great extent) can here be easily studied, while in England we have hardly more than two instances of social plants on a large scale, viz. *Calluna vulgaris* and *Zostera marina*; and of these only the latter grows under coal-making conditions, and would, I suspect, yield, when fossilized, just such ribands of carbonaceous matter as we see in many of the carboniferous shales. I must not anticipate too much, but I will only tell you that every time I go into the marshes (through which I have been cutting a canal of several miles in length) I see exemplifications of all sorts of coal-phænomena, so patent and evident as to make me feel almost clairvoyant for the last hundred thousand years or so. The fossils of our coal-measures, of which I possess about 200, comprise *Murex*, *Dolium*, *Mitra*, *Pyrula*, *Scalaria*, *Magilus*, *Cerithium*, *Strombus*, *Natica*, *Avicula*, *Hemicardium*, *Solen*, *Psammobia*?, several species of Crustacea and *Echinus*, *Flustra*?, a flustroid *Sertularia*, *Caryophyllea*, a Sponge, teeth of fish (chiefly *Squalidæ*, but very rare), a few scales, tooth of a *Diodon*, tooth of a Sauroid fish. Interstratified with these beds, which are frequently more or less calcareous, are shales with fossil resin in several states, and Dicotyledonous leaves, generally very imperfect; no Ferns, *Calamites*, *Lepidodendra*, and *Stigmaria*. I am now writing a paper, and have made large collections of notes on the coal-fields for the Society of Natural History at Batavia, of which I am a member"—besides attending to his laborious duties as Engineer! He employed a native collector of Natural History to proceed into the interior, who preserved skins and the specimens tolerably well; but, as he remarks, "I know, of course, less of the habits of the animals than I did of those at Labuan, where I collected and preserved them myself: my man has just returned from the interior after seven months' absence, and has brought me some novelties, among the rest an enormous Oran Outan." In another letter he he says, "I do not forget Leeds or the Museum of the Philosophical Hall, which was my Alma Mater in what has always been the greatest pleasure of my life—Natural History. I will send you a lot of bird-skins, and some bottles of reptiles, and freshwater fish, freshwater and land shells, and an Ouran Outan if I can get one; my collector was in their district and got only two in two months. The three species inhabit very distant localities in different directions. He is now in pursuit of the small species; and I do not expect him back much before the end of the year. I hope he will bring me a fine lot of water-birds, as he goes to a district of freshwater marshes. I have commissioned him to get all the shells he can: half the land shells of Borneo seem to be new....The Cassowary is not here; it is said to be on the east coast, though I do not quite believe it; there may be one, but I am pretty certain, from the vague reports I have heard, that it is not the common one at all events....The Dugongs are rare on this coast; but I am also too far from the sea (16 miles of wilderness by land, and a day at least by the river) to get many marine specimens. I am, however, not sorry for this; for, although I am

very fond of marine zoology, I have here more chance of getting something new. I do more at present in Botany than in Natural History, and am in correspondence with Sir W. J. Hooker, to whom I have just sent 1300 species, also a collection of Cryptogams to Mr. Mitten of Hurst Pierpoint, a pupil of the veteran Bower. I have greatly improved my garden, which will soon be very beautiful. I have in cultivation about 150 species of *Orchideæ* alone, and a vast number of epiphytal Ferns. Of Palms I have now 26 species about my house; among the most interesting plants here are the Hoyas, of which we have an immense variety, and some among them very beautiful. I have a large collection. Their cultivation is not difficult; it is only necessary to hang them up on my garden paling, made of split palm-wood, and there they very soon fix themselves and are almost always in flower. I have managed to inoculate one of my pupils with a taste for Natural History, and we have commenced making together a collection of insects. Nobody who has not tried it knows the difficulty of keeping insects here from ants while drying. There are some species which seem proof against everything in the way of smell, except always balsam of copaiba; that never fails, but it is, after all, a perfume which one cannot well have about one's house or person. One of the miners here, a rough Northumbrian, declared, with many expletives, that he was d——d if he had not been three years in India and had seen a new sort of ant every day; and I think it quite possible that he could have done so. A collection of them would be very interesting; but I have been deterred by the difficulty of getting all the various states with any certainty of their identity in species. Do you know whether there exists any Monograph upon Ants? I am sorry to say I do not get very many Lice for you. I have told my hunter to collect them, and he has brought me some; but he says it makes his *skin creep* to collect them,—a feeling with which I must confess to have some sympathy, though I have no doubt it is a weakness you have got over long ago. I send two species—one from a large species of Heron akin to the Adjutant, and the other from a musk-scented *Sorex* whose name I do not yet know. There is a popular belief (whether true or not) that the Oran Outan has no lice; at least none have been found, and I suppose they must be very rare. The number of letters which I receive with requests for specimens from persons who have no claim upon me you would scarcely believe. I receive applications from literally the ends of the earth. I have now such from Calcutta, Sydney, New York, and New Orleans, all of which lie still sleeping in a bundle. I assure you it is not possible for me to answer all such letters, much less to send what they ask for. One person, from Germany, has had the coolness to ask me to furnish him with vocabularies of as many as possible of the dialects of Borneo. Talking of languages, Babel is reported to have been in Mesopotamia, but I believe it is here; I speak every day, more or less, four languages—English, French, Malay, and Dyak,—and I ought to speak Dutch; we have also Javanese, Chinese, Bangesene, &c.”

From his zeal in the pursuit of Natural History, there is no doubt

that many valuable additions would have been the result of his labours if his life had been spared. In March last he despatched a box of specimens for the Leeds Museum, amongst which is a series of the fossils of the Borneo Coal-field, which must prove highly interesting, differing so materially as they do from those of the European Coal-fields: these have not yet arrived. Unfortunately, however, the same mail which brought a cheerful letter from him announcing the transmittal of the above, dated March 24th, in which he stated his first cargo of coals was being shipped for Samarang, brought also the sad intelligence of a revolt of the natives and the massacre of all the Europeans in Kalangan, on May 1st, a detailed account of which occurrence was subsequently transmitted to his father by one of the directors of the Company at Batavia. It was as follows:—

“ Batavia, May 23, 1859.

“ Dear Sir,—My name is perhaps only slightly known to you; but in the absence of my friend and co-director, Mr. Tiediman, it becomes my painful duty to communicate to you very sad tidings. I feel almost incompetent to the task, and had rather that another had been the instrument of bearing to a father’s heart all the grief and sorrow which this letter will cause. I only trust, as I do earnestly pray, that He who is near to all who call upon Him in faith will afford you strength to receive with resignation the trials with which it has been His will to visit you. The Government steamer Ardgens, which arrived from Banjarmassing two days ago, has brought the fearful tidings of the destruction of our fine establishment of Kalangan, and the *murder* of our European *employés*, not leaving one of them alas! to tell the tale. The massacre took place on the morning of the 1st of this month. The people had been paid as usual on that day, and dispersed. Everything was quite quiet to all appearance; and though the insurgents were in movement about Pengaron and the neighbourhood, and had on the 28th made an unsuccessful attack on that place, no fears were entertained of an outbreak at Kalangan. Between seven and eight in the morning, however, the insurgents, assisted by some of the mine people, set about to do their work of carnage. The first of the establishment attacked, and immediately killed, was Overseer Hupperetz, and next to him Overseer Bovelt, and then your son, who, on the first report of disturbances, had left his house unarmed, and proceeded the length of the bridge, when, after a struggle of some duration, he was overcome by numbers, and fell an early victim. Mr. Wymalen was able to retire to his house, and defended himself and family for nearly three hours, when the house was set on fire, and four children were barbarously butchered. Mr. Van Heecheren, Mr. Eisager, and Dr. Huisaigen shared the same fate. Of Mrs. Motley and her three children it is also reported that they have not escaped; and in fact Mr. Ouddabye writes positively from Banjarmassing to this effect; but, as this report is not confirmed in all its details, there may still remain a faint hope, but nothing more, that this excellent lady and her children, by the aid of servants, may have effected a temporary concealment, and escaped through the country. I would fain give

you hope on this point ; but I must convey my conviction that the worst is almost certain, but cannot with certainty be known until the reinforcements to be despatched from this and Samarang in three or four days arrive there, and enable Colonel Anderson, the present acting resident, to recover Kalangan, or establish a communication with it. I sincerely trust to be able to give you certain tidings by next mail.

“Not only at Kalangan have these terrors been enacted, but near Poctoi Petak, in the missionary settlement, four missionaries, three of their wives, and nineteen children have been sacrificed ; in fact, the intention of the insurgents seems to have been (incited by some priests lately returned from Mecca) to exterminate the whole of the Europeans in that division of Borneo ; and in this they would have fully succeeded, had the small force under Col. Anderson arrived two days later, which alone enabled them to hold their ground at Banjermassing.

“I am well aware, my dear sir, that in affliction such as yours human sympathy will not console you ; but that you may receive the precious consolations of Him who is to be found of all who call upon Him in time of trouble, is the earnest and sincere prayer of

“Yours very truly,

“Thos. Motley, Esq., Stanley Terrace,  
Douglas, Isle of Man.”

“ALEX. FRAZER.

On the 18th of July another letter was received from Mr. Motley, dated April 18th (the last he wrote), cautioning his father against any anxiety on his account should any rumour of disturbances in Borneo reach England, as he had himself heard some reports, which he did not believe. Alas! in twelve days more he had become a victim, and, it is too probable, all he held most dear in this world.

Philosophical Hall, Leeds, Aug. 11, 1859.

*On a New British Snake.* By Dr. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S. &c.

The Hon. Arthur Russell has brought to the British Museum a specimen of a female *Coronella austriaca* (*Coluber lævis*, Lacépède), which was found near the flag-staff at Bournemouth in Hampshire.

This snake is commonly found in company with the *Lacerta stirpium*, which has only been discovered in England in the same locality. They are equally generally spread and common in different parts of Northern and Eastern Europe. The snake is said to feed often on the lizard. It is curious that as yet the lizard has only been seen in this single locality, though the sandy district in which they are found forms a broad belt across the south of England. The snake may have been overlooked as an Adder, as it is nearly of the colour of the paler specimens (about the usual size) of that species. It is easily known from it by the want of the lozenge-shaped spots on the back, which are replaced in *C. austriaca* by three rows of small darker spots, by the smooth sides, and the shielded head. There is a dark blotch on the crown, and a dark streak under the eyes on each side of the head.

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